Mountain in Springtime

Spring came early to the mountain this year. The sound of falling water marks the warmer days, (though snow flurries in May may have you questioning the season). Yet in time, spring does arrive. You should watch for its signs while traveling through the park. Make time to let Mother Nature entertain you and you will be richly rewarded. For example, this is perhaps the best time of year to view waterfalls such as Christine and Narada Falls, as they brim with sparkling clear water fed by melting winter snow. Green leaves burst from their buds, mushrooms carpet the forest floor, and birds arrive back at the mountain.

Don’t overlook the forest wildflowers that bloom much earlier than their subalpine counterparts. You’ll find white, bushy coltsfoot and the three-petaled trillium blossoms in lowland forests, and yellow skunk cabbage blooming in marshy areas. Look carefully for the elusive fairy slipper or calypso orchid (Calypso bulbosa), a great springtime discovery; they grace us with their presence for only a few short weeks.

Spring is a time of new birth. You may find wildlife with their young offspring in tow around the Trail of the Shadows at Longmire. Geese and goslings glide quietly on beaver ponds and black-tailed deer browse the meadow with their spotted fawns, while the chorus of frogs and songbirds fills the air.

What springtime treasures does the mountain have waiting for you to discover?

Nisqually Road Travel Advisory

Construction work on the historic Nisqually Road between the Nisqually Entrance Arch and the Paradise area is scheduled to take place mid-May through the end of July 2015. Additional work at Paradise is scheduled after October 1 and will continue into November, weather permitting. Park staff will make an effort to keep the public informed of construction activities through the park’s website and social media.

This work continues the second year of a multi-year road construction project that will address outdated utilities and deteriorating road conditions due to abundant precipitation, structural and design deficiencies, large traffic volumes, and normal wear. The project is designed to protect the extraordinary natural and cultural resources within and adjacent to the road, including rare plants and animals, archaeological resources, and the character of the historic roads.

In 2015, power and data lines between Longmire and Paradise are being replaced, which will greatly improve reliability and service. Paving and minor repairs between the Nisqually Entrance and Longmire will also cause minor delays in travel for visitors and staff alike. Delays will be limited to no more than 30 minutes through the entire project. Expect rough road conditions.

Always drive in your lane unless following a pilot car and always stay in your vehicle while stopped. Many workers, heavy equipment, and construction vehicles will be on the road.

Naturalist Programs

Join a park ranger or volunteer for a talk, guided walk, or evening program. These free programs explore the park’s natural and cultural history. Find out who else has come to Mount Rainier and why. Discover what this mountain really is and what it may become. Meet some of the park’s inhabitants—from owls to elk—and find out why they are here.

Check at a visitor center for program times and locations.

Hey Kids!
Ask for a Junior Ranger Activity Book. It’s FREE at all park visitor centers. Complete it to learn lots of cool stuff about your park and earn a badge and certificate.

Citizen Ranger Quests
Has your inner Junior Ranger never really gone away? Try out a Quest! They are designed for older children (12 and up) and adults. Information on Quests is available at visitor centers.

Welcome…

…to Mount Rainier National Park!

Spring normally arrives slowly on the mountain; this year it’s coming a little faster.

With an average annual snowfall of over fifty feet, snow usually lingers at Paradise into July. An exceptionally warm winter makes that much less likely this year. The precipitation that did fall on the lower half of the mountain was mostly rain, not snow. Consequently, Paradise in March had less than five feet of snow on the ground where fourteen feet is average. More snowfall can be expected this spring, yet it won’t make up for a winter with relatively little.

Snow serves an important role in the ecology of Mount Rainier, and the entire Cascade Mountain range. Snow conditions determine when wildflowers bloom, how much and when water will be available for people and wildlife, and over time, whether glaciers and subalpine tree lines advance or recede, and which species thrive or diminish.

If global warming continues unabated and climate change models for the Pacific Northwest are correct, this winter’s wet yet warmer weather could be a more frequent scenario for Mount Rainier. While you are experiencing the park, take a moment to consider how climate change might impact you!

Spring is a great time to visit your National Parks. Please be prepared for the changing conditions of the season to ensure your visit is enjoyable and safe.

Thanks for visiting Mount Rainier!

Randy King
Superintendent

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If You See a Black Bear or a Mountain Lion

Among Mount Rainier’s largest and most feared wildlife are the black bear and the mountain lion. Though you are not likely to see them, they are powerful animals, and your safety depends on how you act around them. Be aware of your surroundings, and follow these guidelines while in the park.

Close Encounters With Black Bears
- Never feed a black bear, either intentionally or by leaving food unsecured.
- Do not approach bear cubs. An adult may be nearby to protect and defend the cubs.
- Back away from a nearby bear, even if it appears unconcerned with your presence.
- Do not run. Back away slowly. Talk loudly.
- A defensive bear will appear agitated and will often give visual and vocal warnings like swatting or stomping the ground, exhaling loudly, huffing, snapping teeth, or lowering the head with ears drawn back while facing you. This response may escalate to a charge.

If Charged by a Black Bear
- If the bear stops, slowly back away while talking, keeping the bear in view while leaving the area.
- If it continues, act aggressively, shouting and throwing rocks or sticks.
- If the bear attacks and you have food, distance yourself from the food.
- If the bear attacks and you do not have food, fight back aggressively.

Close Encounters with Mountain Lions
Mountain lions (also known as cougars) usually do not like confrontation. If you see one, give it plenty of space so it can get away. Never approach lion kittens. Leave the area immediately.
- Do not run or turn your back on a lion.
- Gather children with adults. Quickly pick up and hold small children.
- Stand in a group with your companions.
- If the lion moves toward you, wave your arms and make noise.
- Make yourself look large, intimidating and in control: stand up tall, open your jacket, yell, throw rocks.
- Back away slowly while facing the animal.
- If attacked, fight back aggressively. Stay standing. Hit as hard as possible especially to the head. Use a stick or rock as a weapon. Throw dirt in the eyes. Protect your head and neck.

Report all bear and lion sightings to a ranger.

Climbing
Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Climbing information—including fees, routes, and conditions—is available at ranger stations and the Paradise Climbing Information Center. (See page 4 for locations and hours.)

Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:
Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Hazards of the Season
Winter snowpack may linger late on the mountain. As of March 20, the season snowfall total is over 176 inches with five feet on the ground at the 5,000-foot elevation. This past winter was unusually warm and dry, creating what will likely be an early hiking season this year. However, keep in mind that snow is not the only issue when it comes to safe backcountry travel. Many trails are likely damaged; bridges and footlogs may be out; and large fallen trees may obscure trails.

Many early season hikers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges encountered by a lingering snowpack. Conditions change rapidly during the day and footprints in the snow quickly disappear. This has left many day hikers disoriented upon their return trip, expecting to simply follow their own tracks back to the snow-free trail. This results in many lost individuals, injuries, and fatalities.

Snow avalanches are common in the spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skidding, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing. Be prepared for travel in avalanche terrain. Carry a transceiver, probe, and shovel and know how to use them. Determine if the location you are traveling is avalanche prone. When in doubt, ask questions or don’t go. Unstable snow may slide at any time . . . not just in winter! Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.

Keep Wildlife Wild
Human food puts animals at risk and some die as a result. Birds like jays or ravens are effective nest predators—eating the eggs or young of other birds. By feeding birds, visitors concentrate these nest predators near roads and trails and inadvertently contribute to the death of songbirds in the same area.

Still, one of the most common mistakes people make at Mount Rainier National Park is to feed the wildlife. Visitors seeking a personal connection with animals think they are “helping” them. In fact it harms them in many ways.

Beggar squirrels, foxes, deer, and jays learn to approach people and busy areas. They often get hit and killed by cars. Animals that become accustomed to humans and human food may also pursue and injure visitors. Biologists and rangers must intervene, with killing the animal as the last resort.

Carry the “10 Essentials” and know how to use them!
1. Map and compass
2. Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat
3. Extra clothing (warm) and rain gear
4. Flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries)
5. First aid supplies
6. Waterproof matches or lighter
7. Repair kit and tools (for gear)
8. Extra food
9. Extra water
10. Emergency shelter
Visitor Facility Hours

Visitor Centers
Summer hours will be available in the summer newspaper.

**Longmire Museum**
(360) 569-6575
May 1 - May 4 (open at Longmire WIC) 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
May 5 - May 31 10:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
June 1 - June 16 Closed
June 17 - June 30 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books

**Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center**
(360) 569-6571
May 1 Closed
May 2 - June 16 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily
June 17 - June 30 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily
Due to road construction delays the visitor center may open up to 15 minutes late. Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, books, food, gifts

**Ohanapecosh Visitor Center**
(360) 569-6581
June 26 - June 30 Noon - 4:00 pm Wednesday - Sunday
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books

**Sunrise Visitor Center**
(360) 663-2425
June 27 - June 30 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily
Exhibits, information, books

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

**Longmire Wilderness Information Center**
(360) 569-6650
May 22 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily
Wilderness camping & climbing permits, general information

**Paradise Climbing Information Center (Guide House)**
(360) 569-6641
May 15 - September 7 7:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
Closed 12:00 pm -12:30 pm daily
Wilderness camping and climbing permits, exhibits, general information

**White River Wilderness Information Center**
(360) 569-6670
May 22 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily
Wilderness camping and eastside climbing permits, general information

***Carbon River Ranger Station***
(360) 829-9639
Call for hours
*Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information

Food & Lodging
For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com

**National Park Inn**
At Longmire
Open year-round
Front Desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily
Lodging, dining room

**Longmire General Store**
May 1 - June 12
10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily
June 13 - August 30 9:00 am - 8:00 pm daily
Gifts, snacks, firewood

**Paradise Inn**
Open May 20 - October 5
Front desk open 24 hours daily
Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop

**Paradise Jackson Visitor Center Snack Bar & Gift Shop**
May 1 Closed
May 2 - June 16
10:00 am - 4:45 pm daily
June 17 - September 7 10:00 am - 6:45 pm daily
Food, gifts, books

**Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop**
Open June 27 - August 30
10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily
Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging

GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK

Road Opening Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Dates (subject to change)</th>
<th>Niquality to Paradise (nightly closures through April 12)</th>
<th>Open</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paradise Valley Road</td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens Canyon Road</td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Route 410/Chinook Pass</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayuse Pass via SRs 410 &amp; 123</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White River Road to White River Campground Parking Lot</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise Road</td>
<td>June 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mowich Lake Road</td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please use caution while driving.

Drive-in Campgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground</th>
<th>Open Dates</th>
<th>Elev.</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Group Sites</th>
<th>Toilets</th>
<th>Dump Station</th>
<th>Maximum RV/Trailer Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cougar Rock</strong></td>
<td>May 22 - Oct. 12</td>
<td>3,180’</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>RV 35’/Trailer 27’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ohanapecosh</strong></td>
<td>May 22 - Oct. 12</td>
<td>1,914’</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>RV 32’/Trailer 27’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White River</strong></td>
<td>June 26 - Sept. 28</td>
<td>4,232’</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>RV 27’/Trailer 18’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mowich Lake
Primitive walk-in campground, tents only. 10 sites, 3 group sites (max. group size 12). No fee (must self-register at campground kiosk). Chemical toilets, no potable water. No fires allowed. Elevation 4,929’, generally open July through early October, depending on road and weather conditions. Call 360-829-9639 for information.

*Advance reservations are recommended for individual sites at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds from June 25 through the night of September 6. These can be made up to six months in advance. Reservations for group sites are recommended and are available throughout the season. These can be made up to one year in advance. To make a reservation online, go to www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.

Become A Mount Rainier Steward

Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow!

Consider joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you’ll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile.

Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at http://www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm.

Washington’s National Park Fund serves as the park’s official philanthropic partner. The Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, accepts charitable gifts that are then given back to the park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Improving Visitors’ Experiences by maintaining trails, supporting the park’s Search and Rescue program, and improving campgrounds.
- Bringing more Youth and Families—many of whom might otherwise never visit—into the park.
- Funding necessary Science and Research on glaciers, rivers, flora, and fauna.
- Strengthening Mount Rainier’s Volunteerism and Stewardship activities. The Fund provides support for nearly 2,000 volunteers whose efforts are valued at $1.8 million!

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, drop a few coins in the donation boxes at Mount Rainier’s visitor centers, or purchase a Washington National Parks license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving back to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington’s National Park Fund.

For more information please go to the Fund’s website wnpf.org or email them at fund@wpnf.org.